



School Zone Policy

City of Charlotte
Department of Transportation

Adopted February 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) administers the School Zone Policy in adherence to national standards for signs, pavement markings, and other traffic control devices based on the current edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). This policy supersedes the *School Speed Zone and School Crossing Program*, adopted April 2004.

ELIGIBILITY

All public, private and charter schools with a minimum of 200 students in kindergarten through 12th grade are eligible for transportation treatments under this policy. Schools that do not meet minimum requirements may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

DEFINITIONS and REQUIREMENTS

The following section defines school areas and minimum transportation treatments related to school zones. **Figure 1** illustrates the relationship between school areas and school zones.

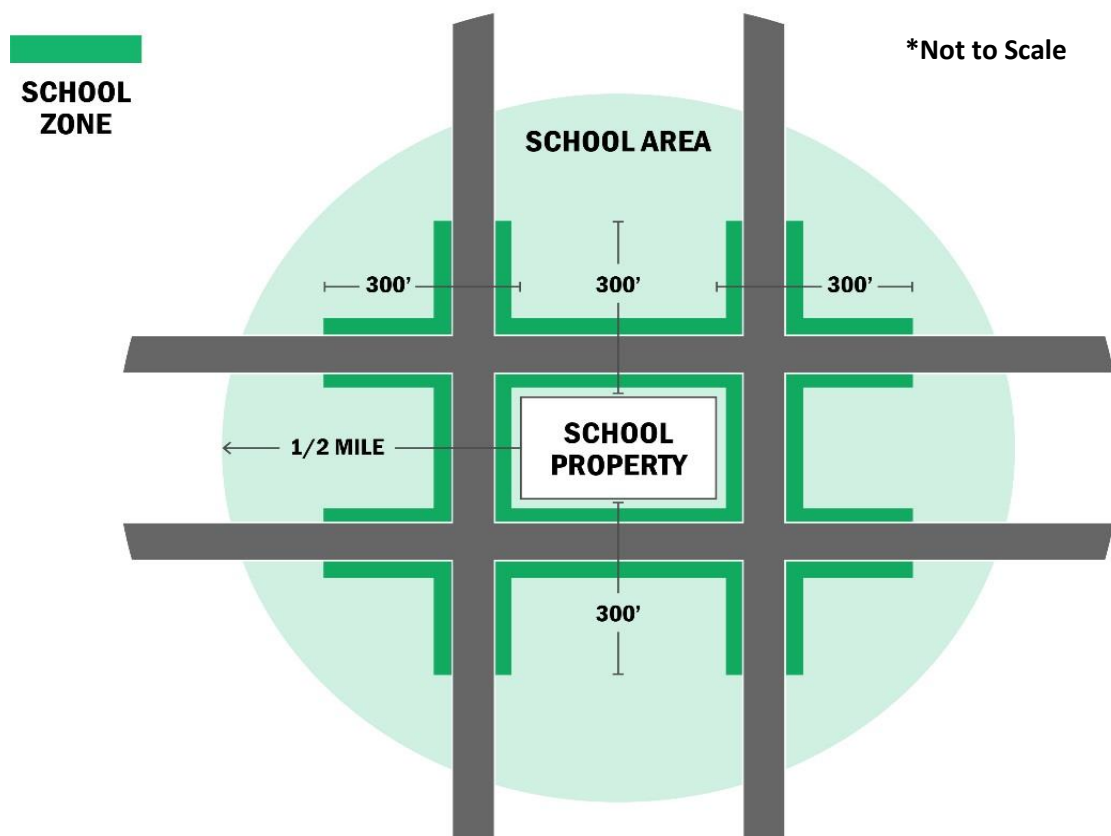


Figure 1. Illustration of School Zones and School Areas

School Area

The school area is typically located within a half mile of a school's property boundary where school-related activities are expected to occur.

School Zone

The portion of the roadway located within three hundred (300) feet of a school's property line. This includes streets that directly front or are adjacent to the school's main access. School zones are identified with a school sign (MUTCD S1-1) and "SCHOOL" pavement marking legend as shown in **Figure 2.**



Figure 2: MUTCD School Sign and Pavement Marking Legend

School Speed Zone

The portion of a roadway located within three hundred feet of a school's property line that includes an established school speed limit. This includes streets that directly front or are adjacent to the school's main access.

School speed zones should be established at 25 miles per hour citywide.

By authority of the Director of Transportation or designee as stated in NCGS 20-141, school speed zones on city-maintained streets will be set at 25 miles per hour. The City will seek concurrence with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to establish school speed zones on state-maintained streets in accordance with this policy.

School Crossing

The location of a pedestrian crossing along a roadway where school children cross. School crossings are typically within three hundred feet of a school's property line on frontage or adjacent roadways. School crossings may include a marked crosswalk, traffic signal, or pedestrian hybrid beacon. Engineering evaluations shall be conducted to determine the appropriate treatments for school crossings.

EVALUATIONS

CDOT will evaluate requests from school officials or citizens for a school zone, school speed zone, or school crossing. The evaluation will include a site visit during school arrival and departure times, and consider the following factors:

- School boundary and attendance area
- Number of students walking or bicycling
- Vehicular traffic volumes
- Vehicle speeds
- CDOT's High Injury Network map
- Geometric conditions of the roadway
- Street lighting

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Adjacent School Zones

When a new location is under review for a school speed zone, its proximity to other schools and all adjacent school zones should be identified. CDOT will determine if school zones should be combined. This evaluation will include several factors including bell schedules, distance between school zones, sidewalk connectivity, pedestrian crossing locations, and school boundaries.

School Flashers on Thoroughfares

School flashers should be installed as a supplement to school speed signage on thoroughfares. The flashers serve as enhancements in school speed zones to alert drivers of the lower speed limit.

Crossing Guards

School crossing guards provide an important enhanced safety benefit at school crossings. Crossing guards shall use a STOP paddle as the primary hand-signaling device to stop traffic at a marked crosswalk in conformance with MUTCD Section 7D.04 and .05. Crossing guards are also required to wear high-visibility retroreflective safety apparel in conformance with MUTCD Section 6E.02. CDOT will determine crossing guard locations. The schools, public, charter, or private, are responsible for providing the crossing guard. Crossing guards are only considered at schools that serve elementary and middle school students.



Figure 3: Crossing Guard at Idlewild Elementary School

REMOVAL

School area signs, pavement markings, and school speed zones should be removed when a school is permanently closed. If it is determined that a new school will open at the same location, CDOT will evaluate the opportunity to preserve the existing traffic control devices.

There are locations where pedestrian crossings such as marked crosswalks or pedestrian hybrid beacons are used by non-students at any time of day. These crossings should be evaluated independent of a school closing.